



# KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## NEWS RELEASE

No. 12-047

July 17, 2012

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Lisa Y. Gross

**Office:** (502) 564-2015 **Cellular:** (502) 330-5063 **E-mail:** [lisa.gross@education.ky.gov](mailto:lisa.gross@education.ky.gov)

## **REPORT RANKS KENTUCKY IN TOP TEN FOR CORE ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT**

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – According to a [report](#) from Harvard University, Kentucky is tied for fifth place nationwide in the improvement of its students' performance in assessments of reading, mathematics and science since 1992.

The report, *Achievement Growth: International and U.S. State Trends in Student Performance*, was produced by Harvard's Program on Education Policy and Governance and presented in *Education Next*, the program's journal. It was designed to determine the extent of the United States' progress toward closure of the international education gap and offers estimates of gains from 1995 to 2009 for the U.S. and 48 other countries. The report also looked at changes in student performance in 41 states between 1992 and 2011 and compares states' rates of improvement, among other items.

Based on results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress ([NAEP](#)) in 4th- and 8th-grade reading, mathematics and science, Kentucky was noted as having a 2.7 percent gain (as an average of the standard deviation) from 1992 to 2011. This ranked the state fifth among 41 states that participated in NAEP during the same time period.

RANK	STATE	AVERAGE GAIN AS % OF STANDARD DEVIATION
1	Maryland	3.3
2	Florida	3.2
2	Delaware	3.2
3	Massachusetts	3.1
4	Louisiana	2.8
4	South Carolina	2.8
5	Kentucky	2.7
5	New Jersey	2.7

(more)

**Visit our website at <http://www.education.ky.gov>.**

Kentucky fared well in other measures outlined in the report.

- The state tied for **third place** in the greatest percentage of reduction of students scoring Below Basic on NAEP at the 4th-grade level. (69 percent)
- Kentucky tied for **ninth place** in the reduction of students scoring Below Basic on NAEP at the 8th-grade level. (42 percent)
- The state tied for **eighth place** in the reduction of the percentage of 4th-grade students scoring below Proficiency on NAEP. (30 percent)
- Kentucky tied for **tenth place** in the reduction of the percentage of 8th-grade students scoring below Proficiency on NAEP. (20 percent)

“These rankings reinforce what we’ve seen in Kentucky’s NAEP performance, particularly at the 4th-grade level,” said Kentucky Education Commissioner Terry Holliday. “Our students are scoring at higher levels on NAEP, and more of them are moving from the lower categories to the higher ones. While this is good news for Kentucky, the state comparisons and the data on U.S. performance contrasted with other countries remind us that we have much more work to do to get all students college- and career-ready.”

The report noted that:

The states making the largest gains are improving at a rate two to three times the rate in states with the smallest gains. States that were further behind in 1992 tend to make larger gains than initially higher-performing states. However, their initial level of performance explains only about a quarter of the variation among the states. Also, variation in state increases in per-pupil expenditure is not significantly correlated with the variation in learning gains.

Kentucky has participated in NAEP assessments since 1992. NAEP administers reading, mathematics, science and other content-area tests to sample groups of students in states. From 1992 to 2002, state participation in NAEP was voluntary. Federal law now requires all states that receive Title I funds to participate in NAEP reading and mathematics assessments at 4th and 8th grades. Student performance on NAEP is categorized as Below Basic, Basic, Proficient or Advanced.

The report also provided estimates of learning gains from 1995 to 2009 for the United States and 48 other countries. The findings come from assessments of performance in math, science and reading, using data from the Programme for International Student Assessment ([PISA](#)), the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study ([TIMSS](#)) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study ([PIRLS](#)).

According to the report:

The gains within the United States have been middling, not stellar. While 24 countries trail the U.S. rate of improvement, another 24 countries appear to be improving at a faster rate. Nor is U.S. progress sufficiently rapid to allow it to catch up with the leaders of the industrialized world.

The full report may be seen at <http://educationnext.org/is-the-us-catching-up/>.

##

**Visit our website at <http://www.education.ky.gov>.**